

# **MS Australia and Chronic Cerebrospinal Venous Insufficiency (CCSVI) - Research and Therapy**

MS Australia is the national group of state-based MS client support organisations. Our primary objective is to provide assistance and support to help make life easier for people living with MS. We understand the important role that research plays as part of this, and we facilitate MS studies through MS Research Australia (MSRA), the research arm of MS Australia.

MS Australia has been very interested in Chronic Cerebro-Spinal Venous Insufficiency (CCSVI), involving impaired drainage in the brain and spinal cord - since late 2009 - when a possible connection between MS and CCSVI was first identified. It has been working with MSRA and MS Societies overseas (including the MS International Federation) to actively assess and analyse the mounting global data on CCSVI and its related therapy.

Also, MSRA is funding a CCSVI study at the Austin Hospital (in Melbourne) where patients are being tested for venous obstruction. Other funds have been earmarked and we are currently encouraging further Australian research and liaising with MS Societies overseas to complement the world-wide effort to better understand this issue.

As more evidence becomes available, we intend to work with leading expert neurologists, vascular surgeons, radiologists, other medical professionals, people with MS, MSRA and the CCSVI community group to find out more and communicate relevant findings.

MS Australia continues to support new treatments, which may improve outcomes for people with MS while understanding that before any treatment can be recommended it should be subject to rigorous scientific testing and review.

On the basis of the current evidence, we do not recommend that people with MS seek CCSVI treatment outside controlled tests. However, as with all forms of treatment\*, it is a matter to be discussed on an individual basis between the patient and their specialist.

## **If CCSVI treatment is being considered it is important to note:**

- There have been documented complications with the use of stents. MS Australia strongly recommends against the use of stents during CCSVI therapy for MS
- Receiving CCSVI therapy as part of a controlled trial is supported if it will contribute to the research being conducted into the treatment.
- People living with MS should communicate with their doctor, neurologist and family members before deciding to undergo CCSVI treatment.

- If the patient and their specialist do decide that CCSVI is appropriate for them, it is recommended that procedures be performed in Australian hospitals where ongoing care can be provided

For more information, please refer to *CCSVI: Your questions answered*, which appears on the MS Australia website.

**\*Disclaimer: MS Australia cannot recommend any specific disease treatments for people living with MS. The choice of therapy to treat the disease is a matter to be discussed with a specialist healthcare professional.**